

# NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Israel Klein**

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**(202) 225-2836**

## **CLOSED-DOOR COMMITTEE CUTS CARGO SCREENING PROVISION AND LEAVES BACK DOOR OPEN ON PASSENGER PLANES**

**Washington, DC:** Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, released the following statement on the completion of the Homeland Security Appropriations Conference Committee. Rep. Markey has long called for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to close the gaping loophole in our passenger plane security system, which allows completely unscreened and un-inspected cargo to be loaded onto passenger planes. The conference committee, on a party-line vote, rejected the House-passed provision championed by Reps. Markey and Shays (R-CT) that would require the TSA to screen or inspect all cargo loaded onto passenger planes.

"The Bush Administration and its Republican allies in Congress have abdicated their responsibility to protect the American people. Safety and security cannot take a back seat to the shipper's mere convenience of not screening air cargo loaded onto passenger planes. Because putting safety and security in the backseat jeopardizes everyone in the passenger seats," Markey stated.

"The strongest cockpit door, the best-trained Air Marshall, armed pilots, and screening every passenger and their bags will NOT prevent a bomb from being loaded into the cargo hold of a passenger plane. Only the physical screening or inspection of cargo will stop terrorists from using air cargo as the next tool to kill Americans." Markey said, "The closed-door committee eliminated passenger plane air cargo screening and left the backdoor in aviation security wide open."

"Today we learned that the Bush Administration and Congressional Republicans have fully endorsed the air cargo loophole. The Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations (CAPA) issued a blistering report card on the Bush Administration's efforts to secure America's airlines – the Republicans in Congress today have followed in their underachieving ways," Rep. Markey concluded.

Reps. Markey and Shays are the chief sponsors of the Universal Screening of Air Cargo Act (H.R. 2455) and the successful amendment in the Homeland Security Appropriations Bill calling for the screening or inspection of all cargo loaded on passenger planes.

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